CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A system for testing semiconductor devices, comprising:

a force retainer mounted on a material handler; and

a force locator interposed between the force retainer and a circuit board and, together with the force retainer, adapted to prevent the circuit board from bending; and

a stiffener ring mounted on the circuit board and surrounding the force locator.

2. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 where the force retainer comprises:

outer and inner rings; and

a plurality of ribs connecting the outer ring to the inner ring.

3. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 comprising ~~where the system comprises~~

a test head including a plurality of connectors connecting the test head to the circuit board;

where the force retainer includes ~~comprises~~ a plurality of openings between adjacent radial ribs; and

where the plurality of connectors protrude through the plurality of openings.

4. (Original) The system of claim 1 where the force retainer is steel.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1 where the force retainer is cast iron.

6. (Original) The system of claim 1 where the force locator is mounted on the circuit board.

7. (Original) The system of claim 1 where the force locator has a same shape as a probe head.

8. (Original) The system of claim 1 where the force locator is adjustable to accommodate spacing limitations between the circuit board and the force retainer.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The tester of claim ~~10~~ 13 where the interface unit comprises a probe head attached to the circuit board on one side and having contact pins protruding from another side.

12. (Currently Amended) The tester of claim ~~11~~ 13 where the force locator is a same shape as the probe head.

13. (Currently Amended) A ~~The~~ tester ~~of claim 10~~ comprising:

a top plate on a material handler;

a force retainer fixedly mounted on the top plate, the force retainer including an outer ring connected to an inner ring by a plurality of ribs; and

an interface unit removably mounted on the force retainer and including a force locator, the force locator being fixedly mounted on a circuit board, ~~where~~ the interface unit ~~comprises~~ including a circuit board stiffener ring mounted on the circuit board and surrounding the force locator.

14. (Currently Amended) The tester of claim 9 13 comprising

a test head adapted to provide electrical signals to a ~~the~~ device under test through at least one connector, the at least one connector protruding from at least one open portion between adjacent ribs.

15. (Currently Amended) A method of testing semiconductor devices, comprising:

fixedly mounting a force retainer to a material handler;

removably mounting an interface unit to the force retainer;

mounting a force locator on the interface unit; and

surrounding the force locator with a stiffener ring.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 comprising mounting ~~a~~ the stiffener ring to a circuit board.

17. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15 comprising

providing the force retainer with inner and outer rings; and ~~connected with a plurality of ribs~~

connecting the outer ring to the inner ring using at least one radial rib.

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15 comprising:

positioning a test head on one side of the handler;

providing the test head with at least one connector; and

threading the connector through the force retainer.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~10~~ 15 comprising:

bringing a device under test into contact with the interface unit thereby creating a probe force;

directing the probe force from the interface unit to the force retainer; and

retaining the probe force using the force retainer.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~10~~ 16 comprising distributing a probe force on the force retainer using the force locator.